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PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

SCOTTSVILLE LITERARY SOCIETY.

No. 3.

THE FIRST HOUSES IN SCOTTSVILLE.

BY

GEORGE E. SLOCUM.

SCOTTSVILLE, N. Y.

ISAAO VAN HOOSER, PRINTER.

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ERRATA.

- Page 5. Fifth line from bottom, 1867 should be 1851.
- Page 7. Second line from top, Jack should be Jacob.
- Page 11. Fifth line from top, avacations should be avocations.

THE FIRST HOUSES IN SCOTTSVILLE; THE BUILDERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

BY

George E. Slocum.



Read before the Scottsville Literary Society, Dec. 1, 1902.



The first human habitation erected by a white man, in this vicinity, was the cabin of Ebenezer Allan; or as he was better known by his sobriquet "Indian Allan." It was located on the flats, between the village and the river, upon a slight rise of ground some twenty rods north of the Oatka, and about one hundred west of the Genesee. It was built in 1786; and with the exception of a log fort erected by the French at the mouth of the Niagara, and a rude structure at the same place to shelter the Jesuit Missionaries of France, it was the first dwelling between the Genesee and Niagara rivers.

Upon the arrival of the Sheffer family in the fall of 1789, they found this cabin occupied by Allan, his Indian wife Sally, two half breed daughters, Mary and Chloe, and a white woman known as Lucy Chapman, whom Allan had

induced to take a half interest in his marital affairs. His sister, the wife of Christopher Dugan, a lady of culture and refinement, having availed herself of the educational advantages of her New Jersey home, was also, temporarily, a member of his household.

Allan was a tory refugee of the American revolution, a man of forty five or more years of age; tall and erect; alert, and energetic in action. He was at times loquacious, at others, morose and uncommunicative; a man of strong passions, and when angry was vindictive and cruel. He seemed possessed of an insane passion for matrimony, and instead of adopting the more discreet policy of disposing of number one before installing number two, he had the temerity of domiciling beneath his roof, three wives of as many different races, at the same period of time. If the object of marriage be a life of peace, then his experiment must be recorded a failure.

Allan was engaged in agriculture, in stock raising, and as an Indian trader. The Sheffers were seeking a location for a home; were pleased with the exhibition of the products of Allan's farm, and with the fine appearance of his herd of cattle. Allan was willing to sell. A bargain was quickly consummated, and the property of Allan, real and personal, was transferred to Sheffer. The two families jointly, occupied the cabin during the winter of 1789; and in the spring of 1790, Allan removed to the falls of Genesee, where he erected a rude saw, and grist mill, that have

since become famous in the annals of Rochester. Remaining at the Falls two or three years he returned to Mount Morris; during the closing years of the eighteenth century, he removed to Canada West, and died there in 1814.

The Sheffer family were from eastern Pennsylvania, and consisted of but three members; an aged father, long passed the period allotted as the life of man; and two sons, Peter Jr., aged twenty eight years, and his brother Jacob, four years younger. In the spring of 1790 the younger Peter Sheffer made the acquaintance of Miss Elizabeth Schoonover, whose father had just settled at Dugan's Creek, and before the summer passed he had induced Miss Schoonover to become Mrs. Peter Sheffer, Jr., and she was duly installed as mistress of the Allan cabin.

Peter Sheffer, Jr., occupied this dwelling for nearly ten years; during which time his father and his brother Jacob died; and during this time four of his family of eleven children were born. In the spring of 1799 Sheffer had the timber prepared, and the frame raised that form a portion of the residence now occupied by Mrs. Thomas Brown. This was the first frame dwelling west of the Genesee. Sheffer resided in this house more than half a century, passing away in 18~~67~~⁵¹ aged eighty nine years. He has left numerous decendents of the third and fourth generation in Wheatland and Chili. He was a man of integrity, and was kind hearted. Possessing more than an ordinary share of this worlds goods, he was enabled to assist those less

favored, in getting a start in their new homes. Sheffer was of German descent, inheriting the peculiarities characteristic of that race. He was no Genius, the blood coursed sluggishly through his veins. Patient, persistent, plodding, he accomplished as much; and was better fitted for the sphere in life he was called to fill, than would have been a man of more brilliant parts, or of a higher nervous temperament.

It has been said that the American people are a migratory race, without an abiding home, ever on the move, but in the Sheffer house we have a dwelling the age of which dates back more than a century that has never sheltered but two families. This long continued occupancy of a home, uncommon as it is, yet is exceeded in the case of the Edson homestead; and in that of our townsman Daniel E. Rogers, who at the age of ninety two years, is still living upon the farm on which he was born, and upon which he has ever resided.

The first dwelling erected in the village proper was built in 1791 by Isaac Scott from whom the village derives its name. It was situated on the south side of Main street upon the site now occupied by the Salyerds block. At first this house was not of the dimensions it afterward attained, but was added to as occasion called for more room. At one time Cyrus Douglass lived in a part of the house, and had charge of his father-in-laws' estate. About the year 1801, this dwelling was opened as a house of

public entertainment; kept at first by Scott, and afterward by his son Jacob.

The following description has been given of the "Scott Hotel:" viewed from the north, it appeared as a double, one and a half story log house; on the first floor were two large square rooms, with sleeping lofts above; the basement, which was lighted from the east and south sides contained the kitchen and dining room.

Scott, at the time of his settlement here was past middle age, with a family of grown children; two of his daughters married brothers by the name of Douglass, one married Jesse Beach, a prominent resident of the village; another married Mr. Davis a hotel-keeper on the State road, one mile east of Leroy. Davis was murdered in his own house by James Gray, who was intoxicated. Gray was convicted and executed at Batavia in 1827.

Scott died in the village in 1818, his wife survived him fourteen years. Hinds Chamberlain, a brother of Mrs. Scott, and the Beaches removed to Leroy, Genesee County; and the Douglasses to the new state of Indiana.

The first frame house erected in the village is still in existence, and still used as a dwelling. It originally stood upon the brow of the hill, in the rear of the lot now owned and occupied by Mrs. Martha Woodgate. It was a one and a half story frame, built by Dr. Augustus Bristol in 1812, over ninety years ago. This house was occupied by

the doctor for many years, and afterward by various families, down to 1860, when the property came into the possession of Alexander Paul who built the block now on the front of the lot, and removed the Bristol house to the rear of the new, and it now forms the kitchen part of Mrs. Woodgate's residence.

Dr. Bristol and his wife were from Connecticut, coming here in the prime of life, in 1811. They had but two children, a son, Ives; and a daughter Paulina, who became the wife Henry Vosburg.

The doctor died in 1862. His wife, a most amiable woman, retained her cheerful disposition, her kindness of heart, her interest in young people; and her industrious habits to the very latest; passing away in 1879, in the ninety fourth year of her age.

The oldest frame house in the village, that has not been changed past all recognition, is the small house next west of the Cargill Hotel. This has been remodeled internally; but its outward appearance remains practically unchanged. It was built by Abram^{ham} Hanford in 1814, and occupied by him as a family residence for some years. In the early twenties he built the two story frame house on the south side of Main Street, now used by L. M. Slocum as a warehouse.

Mr. Hanford occupied his new dwelling for nearly a score of years, after which it was used as the parsonage of

the Presbyterian Church, and as such was occupied by Rev. L. W. Billington, and Rev. Milton Butolph; since then the use to which this building has been converted, are many and various.

Mr. Hanford had a family of six children, one son and five daughters. In 1820 his boy, a little fellow of four years, fell from the bridge then in process of erection over Oatka creek and was drowned; one daughter died in childhood, the others became the wives of William Wisner; Freeman Edson; Osburn Filer; and Ira Carpenter. Mr. Hanford was the first person engaged in selling goods in the village; opening a store for that purpose in 1813 upon the site now occupied by the Keys Brothers, he was afterward engaged in milling; and in several other branches of trade. He died while upon a business trip to Michigan in 1845.

Dr. Freeman Edson came to the village a single man. After he had decided to make this his future home, he made preparations for the construction of a dwelling house, and in 1816 he erected the present frame, with its present dimensions, upon the lot, so long and so familiarly known. Upon its completion, he journeyed to his native state, and upon his return brought Miss Judith Mason, as a bride, to share with him his new house and home.

As first constructed the outward dress of this house, was a plainer garb than the one that now adorns it. In the early forties the cornice, the casings, the corner boards

and the front entrance were made to conform to the style of building then in vogue; since which time, a period of sixty years, its outward appearance has remained unchanged. The doctor was thrice married; his second wife was a daughter of Abram Hanford, and his last was Mrs. Lewis Goodrich. Of his four children, Mrs. Finney of Kansas, and Dr. Hanford A. Edson of our village, are the only survivors.

The doctor after an uninterrupted practice of his profession for more than three score years, passed to his final rest in June, 1883, in the ninety second year of his age.

In the presence of those who knew him as well as did all the older members of this Society, it seems unnecessary to speak of his character or career. Of him suffice it to say, that the cause of religion, of education, of emancipation, of temperance, and every effort, the tendency of which was to elevate and improve the condition of man, found in the Doctor an earnest and zealous advocate.

Wm. Haynes Hanford like his brother ^{son} Abram, was an energetic builder, not only of dwellings, but of business blocks. Of the latter, was the front half of the Williams and Dunn's store; and the south east part of the Garbutt block, now occupied by Joseph Brown.

In 1817 he erected, and for six or more years occupied the frame house that was demolished ten years ago to make room for Windom Hall. In the twenties, he built

the brick house west of the Catholic Church, later known as the Starkey House. This was his family residence for some years. Mr. Hanford was himself a carpenter and worked at house building. He was also a merchant, and among his other avocations was that of farming. He withdrew from active pursuits a few years before his death, which occurred in 1875, in the eighty second year of his age.

Mr. Hanford had a family of three children, Wm. H. Jr., of Olean, Joseph who died many years ago, and a daughter, who became the wife of Judge David K. Cartter of Washington, D. C.

Judge Powel Carpenter came from Westchester Co. in 1804, and located upon the farm now occupied by Elon L. Galusha. He at first built a log house, and after a few years a larger frame one, a portion of that now on the place. In 1820 he built the south east corner of what is now the Cargill House. This was a two story structure 20 x 40 feet, occupying about one fourth of the space now covered by the hotel. Carpenter kept this house a few years, and was succeeded by his son Ezra. Before Carpenter left the hotel an addition of the same dimensions was added on the north, thus making a building forty feet square.

The large addition upon the west was built by E. T. Miller in 1851. When the premises came into the possession of the present proprietor a story was added to the

corner block, making it a three story structure. In 1830 Mr. Carpenter built the brick mill, that was destroyed by fire in 1878.

When Carpenter removed from the hotel he took possession of the Hanford house where Windom Hall now stands, and this was his family residence until his death in 1853. His wife survived him five years. They had a family of ten children, all sons; two of whom died in childhood, the others reached maturity; some of them to old age. Judge Carpenter was a generous, public spirited man. He enjoyed and deservedly so, the confidence and respect of his fellowmen.

The cobble stone dwelling recently remodeled by Mr. Horton, and the cobble stone store now occupied by Keys Brothers were built by Osburn Filer, who succeeded his father-in-law, Abram Hanford, in the sale of merchandise.

The early brick dwellings in the village; as well as many of the brick farm houses in the eastern part of the town, were built in the decade from 1822 to 1832, with bricks that were manufactured in the village. These houses were of similar design, all built with battlements at the end. These, in the process of time, have been removed and cornices put in their place, thus modernizing their appearance to some extent. The manner in which the walls of these houses have resisted the ravages of time, show

that the material and workmanship alike were good.

The cement that joined the brick has become almost as hard and impenetrable as the brick itself. The mason who laid the walls of most of the early brick houses was Edward Collins. Daniel P. Hammond was master mechanic in the same line, at a later period. The last specimen of Hammond's handiwork in the village being the Parsonage of the Presbyterian church, erected in 1854.



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